IVAN THE TERRIBLE

PROFILES IN **POWER**

Andrei Pavlov & Maureen Perrie

Ivan the Terrible

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Preface

This book has been a long time in the making. I was originally commissioned to write it as the sole author: other commitments intervened, and a start on Ivan's 'Profile in Power' was repeatedly postponed. By the mid-1990s, both I and the publishers were beginning to wonder whether it would ever materialise. Soon afterwards, however, a solution suggested itself. I had known and admired Andrei Pavlov's work for many years before we met for the first time at a conference in Berlin in 1998. We began to correspond, and later that year he sent me a copy of a substantial chapter on the reign of Ivan the Terrible which he had recently contributed to a Russian textbook for university students. This greatly impressed me as a synthesis and popularisation of recent Russian historiography of the period, including of course his own authoritative publications, which are based on many years of research in the archives. I proposed to Andrei that he co-author the Ivan 'Profile', and was delighted when he agreed. The contract was renegotiated with the publisher, and I discussed the practical details with Andrei in the course of a research visit to Russia in 1999.

The division of labour between us was largely dictated by our respective interests in the period. Andrei wrote the initial versions of Chapters 4 to 9 in Russian; I translated and edited these, adding some material and references of my own, and drafted the rest of the text. Andrei read and approved my complete English typescript, and we share joint responsibility for the final product.

Transliteration from Russian follows the simplified form of the British Standard (BS 2979-1958). Non-Russian personal names and place-names always pose problems, which I have tried to resolve on a 'common-sense' basis, sometimes at the expense of rigid consistency. Tatar and Lithuanian names mostly appear in transliterated Russified forms. Dates are given according to the Old Style (Julian) calendar, which was nine days behind the Western (Gregorian) calendar in the sixteenth century.

Maureen Perrie

List of Abbreviations

ChOIDR	*Chteniya v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete.*
Correspondence	*The Correspondence between Prince A.M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia*, ed. and trans. J.L.I. Fennell, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.
Kurbsky's History	*Prince A.M. Kurbsky's History of Ivan IV*, ed. and trans. J.L.I. Fennell, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
PSRL	*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei.*
Rude and Barbarous	*Rude and Barbarous Kingdom. Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, ed. L.E. Berry and R.O. Crummey, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968.
TODRL	*Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury Instituta russkoi literatury (Pushkinskii Dom) AN SSSR.*
Zak. akty	*Zakonodatel'nye akty Russkogo gosudarstva vtoroi poloviny XVI – pervoi poloviny XVII veka. Teksty*, Leningrad, 1986.

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Introduction

Ivan the Terrible is one of the most controversial rulers in Russian history. Like Peter the Great – with whom he had much in common – Ivan has acquired a cultural significance which transcends that of most other historical figures, however eminent. Peter symbolises all the dilemmas of Russia's relationship with the West: the need for economic modernisation in order to ensure political survival, at the cost of cultural deformation; and the employment of barbaric means in order to bring about supposedly civilising ends. Ivan is associated with the contradictions of state-building. He has been seen as the founder of an autocratic monarchy which subordinated all of society to itself, sacrificing the freedom of the individual in the interests of the strength, security and order of the realm. To a certain extent, these images are simplifications: but Ivan's policies, like Peter's, raise profound questions about ends and means. Artistic representations of both tsars have been used as vehicles for the exploration of political morality in general, and have also raised more specific issues of Russian cultural identity. In Ivan's case, his conventional epithet has embued him with an aura of violence which has only added to the fascination which he exerts over so many people. In Russian the term '*Grozny*i', which is normally translated into English as 'Terrible', has the more positive implications of 'dread' or 'formidable'.[1] Nevertheless, in much popular Russian literature about the tsar the stereotypes of 'crazed tyrant' and 'evil genius' have been mercilessly exploited for their dramatic and melodramatic potential.

Historians have long been divided in their assessments of Ivan's rule.[2] The greatest disputes have centred on the period of the *oprichnina* (1565–72), when the tsar mysteriously divided his realm into two parts and embarked on a reign of terror. We shall consider the debates about the *oprichnina* in the chapters below which deal with that institution. Here, however, we shall examine general approaches to Ivan's reign as a whole. The American historian Richard Hellie has drawn a useful distinction between those scholars who attempt to provide a 'rational' explanation of Ivan's policies and actions, and those who offer instead an account of the tsar's behaviour as irrational and pathological.[3] The interpretation which

we shall put forward in this volume falls into the 'rational' category; but in the interests of comprehensiveness it may be worth pausing briefly to examine the alternative, 'irrational' approach.

Virtually all historians would agree that Ivan's personality influenced his behaviour. Unfortunately, we have very little information about the tsar's personal biography. This has not, however, prevented some scholars from drawing ambitious conclusions from the few facts that we do possess. Ivan's father died when he was only three years old, and his mother five years later, supposedly leaving him psychologically damaged from childhood onwards. The death of the tsar's first wife, Anastasiya, in 1560, has led to speculation about his emotional reaction to this new bereavement; and his frequent re-marriages have provoked conjectures about his ability to sustain close personal relationships. Popular historians, and the creators of literary and artistic works about the tsar, have made much play of Ivan's presumed psychological characteristics. Serious scholars, too, have justifiably argued that the tsar's personality, like that of all major historical figures, should not be discounted in interpretations of his reign.

Some have, however, gone much further, and argued that Ivan suffered from serious mental illness. From the late nineteenth century, psychiatrists began to take an interest in Ivan's 'case'. Basing themselves on the accounts of his reign provided by historians such as N.M. Karamzin (1766–1826), they diagnosed him as suffering from paranoia, an ailment which manifests itself primarily through delusions of persecution.[4] The professional historians were less impressed. Admittedly, V.O. Klyuchevskii (1841–1911), citing evidence of Ivan's capriciousness, suspiciousness and self-pity, observed that such qualities provided interesting material for 'a psychologist, or rather a psychiatrist'; but S.F. Platonov (1860–1933), while conceding that the tsar may have displayed elements of 'persecution mania', dismissed any suggestion that Ivan suffered from a specific mental illness or that he was insane. S.B. Veselovskii (1876–1952) explicitly rejected the psychiatrists' diagnosis of 'persecution mania' and argued that Ivan's fear of plots and of attempts on his life was well founded, if somewhat exaggerated.[5]

While psychoanalytical and in general 'psychobiographical' approaches to historical figures were ideologically unacceptable in Russia in the Soviet period, certain eminent Western historians were attracted by them.[6] Richard Hellie, in his historiographical introduction to an English edition of Platonov's popular biography of Ivan, argued that the tsar was paranoid, and that the *oprichnina* was a 'madman's debauch'. Paranoia, Hellie asserted, is a disorder of middle age, and it frequently occurs after the

death of a spouse: Ivan was 35 years old when he introduced the *oprichnina* in 1565, five years after the death of Anastasiya. 'The sadism, debauchery, and sexual abuse institutionalized in the years 1565–1572', he added, 'suggest erotomaniac expressions of paranoia.'[7] In a later article, published in a collection of papers presented at a conference held in Chicago in 1984 to 'celebrate' the 400th anniversary of the tsar's death, Hellie developed some of these ideas more fully. He reinterpreted the evidence provided in R.G. Skrynnikov's accounts of Ivan's reign in order to argue that the tsar displayed features of three main types of paranoia: delusions of persecution, erotomania and megalomania. By 1566, Hellie claimed, Ivan was 'totally insane'.[8] In another article in the same collection, Robert Crummey argued that the tsar's brutal punitive expedition against his supposedly treasonous subjects in Novgorod in 1570 can best be explained in terms of paranoia triggered by his unhappy childhood and reinforced by alcohol abuse in later life. The symptoms of Ivan's paranoia included not only his suspiciousness, but also his 'reputedly frantic heterosexual activity'.[9] More recently, the Russian historian Sergei Bogatyrev has speculated further about the tsar's sexual proclivities in relation to his conclusion that Ivan suffered not only from 'persecution mania' but also from a 'flight reflex' – a tendency to distance himself both spatially and psychologically from his familiar environment.[10] Archaeological evidence has also been cited in support of the 'pathological' interpretation of Ivan's behaviour. The tsar's remains were exhumed in 1963 and, on the basis of indications that he had suffered from a painful bone disease, Hellie and Crummey suggested that his illness may have exacerbated Ivan's paranoia.

Intriguing as these conjectures are, they remain hypothetical. Psychology and psychoanalysis are not exact sciences, and the retrospective application of nineteenth-century theories to a sixteenth-century figure, on the basis of somewhat problematic sources, is fraught with dangers. Some of the psychiatrists' approaches are quite bizarre: P.I. Kovalevskii attributed Ivan's psychological instability to the discrepancy in age between his parents, and D.M. Glagolev diagnosed mental illness on the basis of the depiction of the tsar in an icon.[11] Influenced by psychoanalytic theories, Hellie, Crummey and Bogatyrev all seem to accept that the diagnosis of paranoia is confirmed by evidence that the tsar may have engaged in homosexual activity.

'Irrational' explanations of Ivan's behaviour tend to be invoked only when 'rational' interpretations are found wanting. Hellie and Crummey appear to have opted for psychiatric and medicalised approaches to the tsar's reign because they considered alternative explanations to be

inadequate and unconvincing. Until the 1960s, the dominant interpretation in Russian historiography was that of S.F. Platonov, who had presented the *oprichnina* as a policy designed to weaken the old princely aristocracy by destroying its large hereditary landed estates and redistributing them on a conditional basis to the new class of small-scale military servitors.[12] In 1963, however, a collection of S.B. Veselovskii's essays on the *oprichnina* was posthumously published.[13] Veselovskii was damningly critical of Platonov's use of the evidence concerning land transfers on which he had based his main conclusions. Veselovskii, as a result, partly rehabilitated the older 'pathological' view of V.O. Klyuchevskii, who had seen the *oprichnina* as a fruitless attempt by the tsar to resolve his conflict with the boyar aristocracy. Other distinguished Russian historians – notably A.A. Zimin and R.G. Skrynnikov – subsequently provided 'rational' explanations of the *oprichnina* which significantly modified Platonov's interpretation. But Veselovskii's attack on Platonov had tended to discredit such approaches, particularly in the eyes of Western historians, and opened the way to 'irrational', psychosexual explanations such as those favoured by Hellie and Crummey. In the present study, using new sources and methods, we re-examine the evidence relating to land transfers and conclude that Veselovskii's criticisms of Platonov's interpretation were largely unfounded.[14]

It may be worth adding at this point that we shall take issue with another important element of Richard Hellie's interpretation. Hellie argues that the tsar was able to behave in such a bizarre manner only because there were no institutional restraints on the Russian monarch of the kind which were provided in the West by the Church, by urban corporations and the nobility. We, however, shall present the *oprichnina* as, at least in part, an attempt by the tsar to free himself from the constraints on his power provided by the boyars and the embryonic social estates. Unlike Hellie, we see the weakness of institutional restraints on the Russian ruler as a consequence, rather than a cause, of the *oprichnina*.

Regrettably, extra-academic considerations have at times influenced approaches to Ivan's reign. 'Rational' explanations of the *oprichnina* were discredited in the eyes of some by the uses to which they were put in the Stalin period. Although Platonov had been arrested on a trumped-up charge in 1930 and died in exile in 1933, his classic study of the Time of Troubles was republished in 1937, and a simplified version of his interpretation of the *oprichnina* dominated popular and textbook histories for the next two decades. Artistic representations of Ivan the Terrible in the Stalin era reflected the official view of the *oprichnina* as a 'progressive'

phenomenon and of the tsar himself as a great and wise statesman engaged in a heroic struggle to eradicate treason. The intended parallel with Stalin was obvious, and such positive accounts of Ivan's reign were condemned, after the dictator's death in 1953, as allegorical apologias for Stalinism.[15] 'Platonovite' interpretations of the *oprichnina,* such as those contained in the wartime accounts of S.V. Bakhrushin, I.I. Smirnov and R.Yu. Vipper, were viewed as justifications of state terror; and later attempts to provide 'rational' explanations of Ivan's behaviour have been subject to similar accusations. Hopefully such criticisms will fade away in the course of time, as the Stalin era recedes into the past. 'Rational' approaches do not, in any case, lead only to positive assessments. Recent accounts by Russian historians provide predominantly negative evaluations of Ivan's achievements, but even those who broadly approve of the outcome do not justify the means that were employed in order to achieve it.[16]

Any attempt to provide a 'rational' explanation of Ivan's behaviour inevitably encounters the problem of establishing his aims and intentions. This problem arises in part from the absence of direct evidence of the tsar's motives – an absence which fuels the assumption of scholars such as Hellie and Crummey that his actions were in fact motiveless or irrational. The outcomes of Ivan's policies may of course serve as an indication of his aims. But, as we all know from our experience of everyday life, the consequences of actions may be unintended ones. Nevertheless, historians often have little option but to deduce intentions from outcomes, and this is the approach we shall adopt in this study. It is, after all, not unreasonable to assume that achievements which are consistent with the interests of an historical actor represent the results that he intended. The context in which the policies were initiated is also relevant, of course, as is the appropriateness of the means to the assumed ends. But we shall be more concerned in this book with determining the results of Ivan's policies than with speculation about his motives.

In the last resort, of course, the validity of historians' interpretations depends on their use of evidence. Sources for Ivan's reign are plentiful, but not unproblematic. A substantial number of official Russian documents has survived, notwithstanding the fact that many were destroyed during the Time of Troubles in the early seventeenth century, while others perished in a disastrous fire in 1626. There are numerous narrative accounts, although the official chronicle frustratingly breaks off at the beginning of the *oprichnina* period. Because of the incompleteness of the Russian sources, the reports written by Western visitors to Muscovy in the sixteenth century – including the first English voyagers, who established commercial and diplomatic links from 1553 onwards – provide

particularly valuable evidence. The testimony of these foreign witnesses was, of course, often influenced by their prejudices and misunderstandings of Russian customs, and – like all sources – must not be accepted uncritically.

Some evidence concerning sixteenth-century Russia survives only in manuscripts of the seventeenth century or later, and the problem of attributing the correct dates to the original versions of such sources has given rise to many heated academic debates. One of these controversies has overshadowed study of Ivan's reign, in the West in particular, for the last few decades. For many years historians considered that the correspondence between Tsar Ivan and Prince Andrei Kurbskii, one of his generals who defected to Lithuania in 1564, was a source of primary importance for evaluating the tsar's character and his views on the nature of his royal power. In 1971, however, the Harvard historian Edward Keenan published a highly controversial monograph in which he argued that the correspondence was not authentic, but was instead composed in the seventeenth century. Keenan went on to claim that the 'History' of Ivan's reign attributed to Kurbskii was also not genuine.[17] Keenan's arguments triggered a lengthy international debate which is still not entirely concluded. The overwhelming weight of scholarly opinion, however, is against Keenan and in favour of the authenticity of the sources which he questioned.[18] In this book we assume that both the 'Correspondence' and the 'History' are genuine (although none of our major arguments would be seriously undermined if Keenan's hypotheses were somehow to be confirmed).

While new sources of the traditional kind continue to be discovered and published, in recent years historians in both Russia and the West have begun to make use of new types of evidence. They have examined pictorial images such as icons, murals and frescoes, and explored the symbolism of churches and cathedrals – previously the preserve of specialists on art and architecture.[19] Rituals and ceremonies, such as coronations and processions, have been analysed in order to elucidate the symbolism of power.[20] Some scholars have also explored the ritualised violence of the *oprichnina* terror in an attempt to reach a fuller understanding of its meaning.[21] The semiotic approach of B.A. Uspenskii and his colleagues is particularly valuable because it helps us to comprehend many otherwise puzzling aspects of Ivan's behaviour in terms of the cultural system of his age, thereby avoiding the problems inherent in psychological interpretations which assume that the human personality is a constant entity which functions independently of its historical context.

Although it is organised on a primarily chronological basis, the present study does not aim to provide a biography of Tsar Ivan. Nor is it an account of 'Russia in the age of' Ivan IV: many important aspects of sixteenth-century Muscovite history are not covered here at all. Rather, in line with the aims of 'Profiles in Power', we shall focus on politics. We shall examine three main aspects of Ivan's power. The first major theme will be Russia's territorial expansion and the tsar's efforts, by means of diplomacy and warfare, to enhance the international prestige of his state. We shall discuss the significance of the Russian annexation of the Volga khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan' in the 1550s, and examine the protracted Livonian War (1558–83), which ultimately failed to establish a Russian presence on the Baltic. A second issue concerns the development of the ruler's own power in relation to that of the boyars and other privileged landholders. In this connection the problem of the causes and consequences of the introduction of the *oprichnina* is, of course, a dominant concern. Finally, we shall pay attention throughout our study not only to the mythology of power, but also to its rituals and symbols: in a society with low levels of literacy these visual expressions of monarchical ideology assumed particular importance as a means of conveying to the population the grandeur of the tsar and the splendour of his realm.

Notes

1 See, for example, Marc Szeftel, 'The Epithet *Groznyj* in Historical Perspective', in A. Blane, ed., *The Religious World of Russian Culture*, The Hague: Mouton, 1975, pp.101–15.

2 English-language reviews of the historiography include: Leo Yaresh, 'Ivan the Terrible and the *Oprichnina*', in C.E. Black, ed., *Rewriting Russian History: Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past*, New York: Praeger, 1956, pp.224–41; Anatole G. Mazour, 'Ivan IV and the *Oprichnina*', in his *The Writing of History in the Soviet Union*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1971, pp.67–78; Robert O. Crummey, 'Ivan the Terrible', in S.H. Baron and N.W. Heer, eds., *Windows on the Russian Past: Essays on Soviet Historiography since Stalin*, Columbus, OH: AAASS, 1977, pp.57–74; Alexander Yanov, *The Origins of Autocracy: Ivan the Terrible in Russian History*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981; and Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001.

3 Richard Hellie, 'In Search of Ivan the Terrible', in S.F. Platonov, *Ivan the Terrible*, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1974, pp.ix–xxxiv.

4 See Sergei Bogatyrev, 'Groznyi tsar' ili groznoe vremya? Psikhologicheskii obraz Ivana Groznogo v istoriografii', *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, vol.22, no.3, fall 1995, pp.285–308.

5 V.O. Klyuchevskii, *Sochineniya*, vol.2, Moscow, 1957, p.192; S.F. Platonov, *Sobranie sochinenii po russkoi istorii*, vol.2, St Petersburg, 1994, p.84; S.B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya po istorii oprichniny*, Moscow, 1963, pp.319–20.

6 For an early flirtation with psychological theories, see Bjarne Nørretranders, *The Shaping of Czardom under Ivan Groznyj*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1971 (first published Copenhagen, 1964), pp.130–37.

7 Hellie, 'In Search of Ivan the Terrible', pp.xix, xxiii, xxvii.

8 Richard Hellie, 'What Happened? How Did He Get Away With It? Ivan Groznyi's Paranoia and the Problem of Institutional Restraints', in Richard Hellie, ed., *Ivan the Terrible: a Quarcentenary Celebration of his Death* (*Russian History/Histoire Russe*, vol.14, 1987), pp.199, 209.

9 Robert O. Crummey, 'New Wine in Old Bottles?: Ivan IV and Novgorod', in Hellie, ed., *Ivan the Terrible*, pp.68–72; see also the chapter on Ivan's reign in Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy, 1304–1613*, London: Longman, 1987.

10 Sergei Bogatyrev, 'Povedenie Ivana Groznogo i moral'nye normy russkogo obshchestva XVI v.', in *Studia Slavica Finlandensia*, vol.11, Helsinki, 1994, pp.8–9.

11 Bogatyrev, 'Groznyi tsar'', pp.289–90.

12 Platonov, *Ivan the Terrible*; see also his *Ocherki po istorii smuty v Moskovskom gosudarstve XVI–XVII vv.*, Moscow, 1937, part 1.

13 Veselovskii, *Issledovaniya*. Veselovskii had been able to publish only one statement of his controversial views in his lifetime: 'Uchrezhdenie Oprichnogo dvora v 1565 g. i otmena ego v 1572 godu', *Voprosy istorii*, 1946, no.1, pp.86–104.

14 These conclusions are based on Andrei Pavlov's research: see, in particular, A.P. Pavlov, 'Opyt retrospektivnogo izucheniya pistsovykh knig', in *Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie distsipliny*, vol.17, Leningrad, 1985, pp.100–20; A.P. Pavlov, 'Zemel'nye pereseleniya v gody oprichniny', *Istoriya SSSR*, 1990, no.5, pp.89–104; and A.P. Pavlov, *Gosudarev dvor i politicheskaya bor'ba pri Borise Godunove (1584–1605 gg.)*, St Petersburg, 1992, pp.149–217.

15 Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible*.

16 An example of the former position is V. Kobrin, *Ivan Groznyi*, Moscow, 1989; for the latter, see Boris Florya, *Ivan Groznyi*, Moscow, 1999.

17 Edward L. Keenan, *The Kurbskii-Groznyi Apocrypha*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971; Edward L. Keenan, 'Putting Kurbskii in his Place, or: Observations and Suggestions Concerning the Place of the *History of the Grand Prince of Muscovy* in the History of Muscovite Literary Culture', *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, vol.24, 1978, pp.131–61.

18 For a recent assessment of the debate, see: C.J. Halperin, 'Edward Keenan and the Kurbskii-Groznyi Correspondence in Hindsight', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Band 46, 1998, pp.376–403; and Keenan's 'Response to Halperin', *ibid.*, pp.404–15.

19 See, for example, Priscilla Hunt, 'Ivan IV's Personal Mythology of Kingship', *Slavic Review*, vol.52, 1993, pp.769–809; Daniel Rowland, 'Biblical Military Imagery in the Political

Culture of Early Modern Russia: the Blessed Host of the Heavenly Tsar', in Michael S. Flier and Daniel Rowland, eds., *Medieval Russian Culture*, vol.2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, pp.182–212; A.L. Yurganov, 'Oprichnina i strashnyi sud', *Otechestvennaya istoriya*, 1997, no.3, pp.52–75.

20 For example: David B. Miller, 'Creating Legitimacy: Ritual, Ideology, and Power in Sixteenth-Century Russia', *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, vol.21, 1994, pp.289–315; Nancy S. Kollmann, 'Pilgrimage, Procession and Symbolic Space in Sixteenth-Century Russian Politics', in Flier and Rowland, eds., *Medieval Russian Culture*, vol.2, pp.163–81; Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power. Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, vol.1, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, chapter 1.

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Chapter 1

Ivan's Inheritance

The Muscovite state which Grand Prince Vasilii III bequeathed to his infant son Ivan IV in 1533 was a comparatively recent formation, created by the annexation of neighbouring north-eastern Rus' principalities by the grand princes of Moscow. It was also only comparatively recently that Muscovy had established its independence from the Tatars who had exercised suzerainty over the Rus' lands since the thirteenth century.[1]

The dynasty of the grand princes of Moscow traced its origins back to the semi-legendary figure of Ryurik the Viking, who had in the ninth century been invited by the peoples of what is now north-western Russia to come and rule over them. In due course the Ryurikids (Ryurik's descendants) became the princes of the land known as Rus', which was inhabited predominantly by eastern Slavs. Their capital city was Kiev (in present-day Ukraine), and their state is thus frequently described as Kievan Rus'. In the tenth century it extended from Kiev in the south to Novgorod in the north; it subsequently expanded eastwards, to Nizhnii Novgorod on the River Volga, and to the foothills of the Ural Mountains.

In the thirteenth century the lands of Rus' were invaded from the east by the Mongols, a nomadic Asiatic people also known as the Tatars. Their military campaigns of 1237–40 were led by Batu, a grandson of Genghis (Chingis) Khan. In December 1240 the Mongols captured Kiev, before continuing westward into Poland and Hungary. Batu built his capital at Sarai, on the lower Volga, and the Rus' lands were incorporated into his realm, the Kipchak Khanate, which has become better known as the Golden Horde. With the construction of Sarai, the ruling élite of the khanate became settled and urbanised; and in the fourteenth century the Horde adopted Islam. The official language of the Horde was Turkish, reflecting the extensive assimilation of the original Mongol invaders to the indigenous Turkic peoples of the steppes.

By the time of the Mongol invasion, Kievan Rus' had acquired a complex political structure. The grand prince, the senior member of the

Ryurikid dynasty, was based in Kiev. From the time of Yaroslav 'the Wise' (d.1054) the other main towns were allocated to junior members of the dynasty on a hierarchical basis which (in theory, but not always in practice) determined the order of succession to the Kievan throne. From 1097 these towns were recognised as the capitals of separate principalities which were passed down within the same branch of the dynasty. In subsequent decades some of the principalities became increasingly independent of Kiev. One of these more independent principalities was Suzdalya, to the north-east of Kiev, which expanded and prospered in the twelfth century. Often known as Vladimir-Suzdal', its major towns were Rostov, Suzdal' and Vladimir, all of which served at various times as its capital. The town of Moscow, in the south-west of Suzdalya, is mentioned for the first time in 1147, in the reign of Prince Yurii Dolgorukii.

The Mongol invasion reinforced the growing division between the south-western and the north-eastern lands of Rus'. Kiev itself was severely weakened, and ceased to serve as a focal point for all the Rus' principalities. In the course of the fourteenth century the western and south-western lands – Polotsk, Turov, Volynia, Galicia, Smolensk, Chernigov, Pereyaslavl' and Kiev itself – came under the control of Poland and Lithuania, while the north-eastern principalities, including Suzdalya, remained part of the Golden Horde.

In spite of the political separation of the north-eastern principalities from the south-western lands, religion remained a unifying factor for the peoples of Rus'. Kievan Rus' had adopted Christianity in 988, with the conversion of Prince Vladimir I. Vladimir adopted his new religion in its Eastern Orthodox form, from Byzantium (Constantinople), and Rus' continued to have close relations with the Byzantine Empire throughout the Kievan period. Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavovich married a relative of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus; their son, who became grand prince of Kiev in 1113, was known as Vladimir Monomakh. After the Mongol invasion, Kiev at first remained the ecclesiastical centre of the lands of Rus'; in 1299, however, Metropolitan Maksim, the head of the Church, moved from Kiev to Vladimir. In 1325 Metropolitan Peter took up residence in Moscow, which became the official seat of the metropolitan in 1354.

Although Mongol domination was for a long time described by Russian historians as the 'Tatar yoke', the overlordship which the khans of the Horde exercised over the Rus' lands mainly assumed the form of the exaction of tax or tribute. From the fourteenth century, the Rus' princes themselves acted as tax-collectors and administrators for their Tatar overlords. The Mongols asserted the right to appoint the princes,

who had to travel to Sarai to receive the khan's *yarlyk* or letter of confirmation. In 1243 the khan granted Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich of Vladimir the titles of grand prince of Kiev and grand prince of Vladimir; thereafter, Vladimir replaced Kiev as the dominant principality of the Rus' lands. In general the Mongols respected the rules of dynastic succession to the grand princely throne which had operated in the Kievan period. In 1328, however, rivalry between the Tver' and Moscow branches of the dynasty for the position of grand prince was resolved by the khan in favour of the latter. Prince Ivan Daniilovich of Moscow became grand prince of Vladimir as a result of the khan's patronage, even though he had no legitimate claim to the throne according to the traditional principles of succession. Ivan I (nicknamed '*Kalita*' or 'Moneybags', because of his financial acumen) was therefore more dependent on the Mongols than his predecessors had been. Ivan Kalita and his heirs made frequent visits to the Horde; this custom familiarised the grand princes of Vladimir with Mongol methods of rule and administration, and may have inspired them to adopt similar practices in their own domains.[2]

The period of Mongol domination is often described as the era of 'fragmentation' of the Rus' lands. Not only did it witness the separation of the south-western principalities around Kiev from the north-eastern territories of the grand princes of Vladimir, but in the north-eastern lands themselves the principalities were increasingly subdivided. Vladimir-Suzdal' was split into Vladimir, Suzdal' and Rostov, which were in turn broken up; Beloozero and Yaroslavl', for example, were carved out of Rostov. These smaller principalities, which were inherited within a single branch of the dynasty, were known as appanages (*udely*) – a term which is sometimes used to characterise the period as a whole.

After Ivan Kalita became grand prince of Vladimir, however, the principality of Moscow began to expand through the annexation of neighbouring principalities. This process, commonly known as the 'gathering of the lands of Rus'', continued under his successors. Ivan III (1462–1505) annexed the great city of Novgorod, with its extensive northern hinterland, and added the principality of Tver' to his domains. His son, Vasilii III (1505–33), incorporated Pskov and Ryazan'. At the death of Vasilii III, Moscow not only ruled all of the north-eastern lands which had formed part of the Golden Horde, but as a result of wars with Lithuania it had acquired some of the territory of the Chernigov and Smolensk principalities of Kievan Rus', including the important fortress of Smolensk itself (see Map 1.1). With this westward expansion Muscovy acquired a population which included some of those east Slav peoples who were subsequently to become known as Belorussians and Ukrainians.

Map 1.1 Muscovy in 1533

By this time, Muscovy had emancipated itself from Mongol overlordship. In the middle of the fourteenth century the Golden Horde began to experience a number of internal crises which were to lead to its disintegration. Its main offshoots were the Crimean khanate, on the northern

shore of the Black Sea, and the khanate of Kazan', on the mid-Volga. The remainder of the Golden Horde, which became known as the Great Horde, retained its base on the lower Volga, although its capital, Sarai, never recovered from its devastation by the Mongol warlord Timur (Tamerlane) at the end of the fourteenth century. The Rus' princes took advantage of the discord within the Horde in order to challenge their Mongol overlords. In September 1380 Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich led a coalition of princes that defeated the Tatar warrior Mamai at Kulikovo, on the upper reaches of the River Don. Dmitrii, who gained the epithet 'Donskoi' from his victory, did not however succeed in overthrowing the suzerainty of the khan, who continued to dominate the lands of north-east Rus'. As the Golden Horde disintegrated, however, Moscow became more self-assertive. A confrontation on the River Ugra which took place in October 1480, between Grand Prince Ivan III and Akhmat Khan of the Great Horde, is often said to have marked the definitive end of the 'Tatar yoke'. In practice the grand prince was by this time an independent ruler, although he continued to pay tribute to the Mongols even after 1480. Following the destruction of the Great Horde by the Crimean Tatars in 1502, Ivan III sent the payments to the Crimean khan, but it was now little more than a token gesture.

By the reign of Vasilii III, the Great Horde had been succeeded on the lower Volga by the khanate of Astrakhan'; the steppes further east were dominated by the nomadic Nogai Horde; and to the north there lay the khanate of Siberia. These successors of the Golden Horde were fragmented and disunited, and they posed little threat to Muscovy. On the mid-Volga, the khanate of Kazan' was more formidable, but its relations with Russia were fairly stable. The greatest potential danger was presented by the Crimean khanate. Since 1475 Crimea had been a vassal of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, which had continued to expand, after its conquest of Constantinople in 1453, to the northern shores of the Black Sea. The Russians feared that in any conflict with the Crimean khan, the latter would receive the support of his master the Sultan.

At the time of the 'stand on the Ugra' in 1480, Ivan III had formed an alliance with the Crimean khan, Mengli-Girei, against the combined forces of Akhmat Khan of the Great Horde and King Casimir IV of Lithuania and Poland. The Muscovite association with Crimea expanded to include Kazan', when in 1487 Russian troops helped to place Mengli-Girei's stepson, Magmet-Amin', on the Kazanian throne. After the death of Ivan III, however, the alliance with Crimea was weakened. Mengli-Girei's successor, Magmet-Girei, sided with Poland-Lithuania in its wars against Russia, and in 1521 the Crimean Tatars attacked and besieged Moscow